

From: Doug Matthews
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 7:29pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Dear United States Department of Justice,

As a US citizen and computer programmer, basically someone who has a lot riding on the health of the technology industry in the US, I want to let you know how I feel about the proposed settlement with Microsoft.

I do believe that the best thing for any industry is free and fair competition. And I do believe that at the beginning of the personal computer era Microsoft was a great catalyst for bringing the power of computers to the masses, their focus on the customer was second to none and their success is a testament to their hard work and smart management.

However, Microsoft's recent behavior in the market place is no longer beneficial to consumers because they have monopoly power and have shown that they are not afraid to use it.

Unless the settlement with Microsoft is reworked I'm afraid it will send the wrong message; that it is OK to play fast with the law as long as you have enough cash and enough lawyers to fight the court cases long enough.

I am particularly worried about them forcing contractual restrictions on hardware vendors and also keeping those vendors from innovating above and beyond the standard Windows desktop.

I would like to believe that some kind of oversight of Microsoft will work, but again, call me cynical, but Microsoft is big, powerful, very rich and not afraid to take on a fight, even with the US government.

This really is one of those big, important cases that will shape the course of history, definitely the history of the technology industry. I really do wish that a "hands off" approach would work in this situation, but I honestly don't see that happening here with Microsoft, they are a monopoly and have to be treated as such. Did they break the law? I believe the answer is yes. Is the proposed remedy an appropriate punishment? I believe the answer is no, it is more a slap on the wrist and won't stop there anti competitive behavior. This is one time where we truly need the government to step in and right the wrongs.

Sincerely,

Doug Matthews
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